United Nations E/CN.18/2015/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 February 2015

Original: English

United Nations Forum on Forests
Eleventh session
New York, 4-15 May 2015
Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda*

Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Regional and subregional inputs

Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination and regional and subregional inputs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a brief overview of the activities undertaken since the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in areas related to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues, as well as inputs from regional and subregional organizations and processes to the eleventh session. First, the report highlights activities among relevant forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Second, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49, the report compiles views and inputs from regional and subregional organizations and processes on the overall theme of the eleventh session, namely, "Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement on forests". Finally, the report summarizes trends in activities reported by national Governments and regional and subregional organizations on enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including to mark the International Day of Forests in 2014.

* E/CN.18/2015/1.

15-01611 (E) 270215

Please recycle

Within the context of the future of the international arrangement on forests, the report highlights the modalities for regional and subregional cooperation mentioned and/or proposed during the intersessional activities held between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum.

Recommendations and key action points on these issues are included in the Secretary-General's report on reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options (E/CN.18/2015/2), which is being submitted to the Forum for consideration.

I. Introduction

1. In the framework of the international arrangement on forests (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 1/1), the Forum addresses issues related to promoting enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination among Member States, international and regional organizations and major group stakeholders, and provides guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests[1] at each session of the Forum. The present report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the Forum secretariat since its tenth session to enhance cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues. The report also provides a brief overview of such activities among relevant Member States, organizations, processes and stakeholders. A number of such activities are covered in detail in other reports of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the Forum at its eleventh session and in the information document on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2013 and 2014 (E/CN.18/2015/7).

2. The report showcases the points of view of regions and subregions on the overall theme of the eleventh session of the Forum and on the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, as well as on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (see General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex) and progress towards the implementation of the four global objectives on forests (ibid., sect. IV).

3. Finally, the report summarizes trends in activities reported by national Governments and regional and subregional organizations on enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including to mark the International Day of Forests in 2014,[2] drawing on information in 81 national reports, 16 regional reports and 10 reports on International Day of Forests activities.

II. Cooperation and policy and programme coordination within the United Nations

A. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly

4. A main outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, was the agreement by Member States to develop a set of sustainable development goals. The 30-member

[1] The following organizations are members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests: the Centre for International Forestry Research, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

[2] By its resolution 67/200, the General Assembly proclaimed 21 March of each year the International Day of Forests, to be observed starting in 2013.

Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals was tasked with preparing a proposal on those goals.

5. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", States requested the Secretary-General to ensure all necessary input and support to the Open Working Group from the United Nations system, including by establishing an inter-agency technical support team. The technical support team consists of over 40 United Nations entities, works under the umbrella of the United Nations system task team on the post-2015 development agenda and is co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme.

6. The Forum secretariat is a member of the technical support team and as such has been responsible for providing technical support to the members of the Open Working Group in their forest-related deliberations on the sustainable development goals and associated targets, including by coordinating the preparation of the Forest Issue Brief and of forest-related inputs on the negotiating documents of the Open Working Group in collaboration with other members of the technical support team. Currently, the Forum secretariat, through the technical support team, is working on the elaboration of indicators for the proposed sustainable development goals with assistance from the Statistical Commission. The Forum secretariat is also a member of the United Nations Communications Group inter-agency task force on the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was established by the Department of Public Information to share information, coordinate key messages and develop system-wide communications campaigns.

B. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

7. As part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Forum secretariat works very closely with the other divisions of the Department on various issues, ranging from policy research to analysis, capacity-building and coordinated communications.

Policy research and analysis

8. The research and analytical work done by the Department covers a range of economic, social and environmental issues and is disseminated through flagship publications and intergovernmental reports. Since the tenth session of the Forum, the Forum secretariat has provided substantive input to these flagship publications, including the *World Economic Situation and Prospects* reports for 2014 and 2015, and to innumerable intergovernmental reports and policy documents on issues related to sustainable development, financing for development and environmental economic accounting, to name a few.

Capacity-building

9. The Department aims to develop the capacities of developing countries to translate internationally agreed policy frameworks into national strategies and programmes. In this regard, the connection between the Forum secretariat and the United Nations Development Account, of which the Department is an implementing entity, is noteworthy.

10. The Development Account is a capacity-building programme of the United Nations Secretariat that aims to enhance the capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the development agenda.[3] Funded from the Secretariat's regular budget, the Account was originally established in 1997; since then, it has approved 302 projects with a total budget of $181.3 million. Since the tenth session of the Forum, the Forum secretariat has secured funding from the Account for two projects: one on climate change financing for forests and the other on promoting the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

11. The Development Account project on climate change financing, which ran from 2012 to 2014 and received $600,000 in funding, aimed at assisting decision makers in developing countries to effectively harness funding from new and emerging sources of forest financing, including the enhanced mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+), thereby addressing gaps in forest financing. Further information on the activities of this project is contained in the Secretary-General's report on the means of implementation for sustainable forest management and forest law enforcement and governance at all levels (E/CN.18/2015/4).

12. The Development Account project on strengthening national capacities to implement the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests is expected to run from 2015 to 2017 and to receive $509,000 in funding. It aims to address the fragmentation among countries in implementing the instrument owing to the lack of national action plans for that purpose.

13. Finally, support from the Department's regular programme of technical cooperation was instrumental for the facilitative dialogue workshop on the international arrangement on forests held in Vienna on 22 and 23 October 2013. The workshop, which was funded from other sources, including the regular budget, facilitated a knowledge-based discussion on the future of multilateral polices and institutions related to forests and on the ongoing intersessional activities held in preparation for the eleventh session of the Forum.

Coordinated communications

14. The Communications and Information Management Service provides outreach, web and social media services for the Department and facilitates the use of information technology and knowledge-sharing. Since the tenth session of the Forum, the Forum secretariat has cooperated closely with the Service on the production of online newsletters and on social media and multimedia outreach efforts in support of Forum meetings and activities to mark the International Day of Forests.

[3] More information on the Development Account is available from www.un.org/esa/devaccount.

III. Cooperation and coordination with international organizations, instruments, institutions and programmes relevant to the forestry sector

A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests

15. The activities undertaken by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are described in the information document on the Partnership's Framework 2013 and 2014 (E/CN.18/2015/7).

B. Cooperation with international organizations, institutions and programmes

16. Between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum, the Forum secretariat participated in the sessions of the main deliberative bodies of the Partnership's partners, as well as of several of the regional and subregional entities that collaborate with the Forum. Those institutions also participated in Forum activities.

17. Significant collaboration occurs within the context of the United Nations Environment Management Group, a United Nations system-wide coordination body on environment and human settlements that is chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); its secretariat is also provided by UNEP. Among the Group's members are the specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations, including the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements. The Group works through technical meetings, issues management groups and task forces. The Forum secretariat participates in this coordination body with other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Currently, the Group is focusing on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the post-2015 development agenda process and the outcome of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP. Specifically, the Group is working on a system-wide strategy on the environment, as well as on enhancing coordination on environmental issues in the United Nations system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The Forum secretariat has also provided input to other Group initiatives, including one on global drylands that was developed following calls for a system-wide response to land challenges and that addresses the underlying causes of land degradation.

18. The Forum secretariat has participated in all the conferences of the parties to the Rio Conventions and endeavours to continue to work closely with the secretariats of those conventions, both in the context of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and bilaterally.

19. Forest financing is an area of growing collaboration with international organizations, specifically in the context of the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility, which has been supportive of the facilitative process.[4] The modalities of this cooperation are further detailed in the Secretary-General's report on the means of implementation for sustainable forest management and forest law enforcement and governance at all levels (E/CN.18/2015/4).

[4] More information on the facilitative process is available from http://unff-fp.un.org.

20. Since the tenth session of the Forum, illegal logging has become a notable new area of international collaboration. The World Trade Organization collaborated for the first time with the Forum through its Committee on Trade and Environment. The Forum secretariat was invited to participate in the Committee meeting held in Geneva in October 2014, where its representative gave a presentation on Forum activities that are relevant to forest law enforcement, governance and trade, as well as illegal logging. An overview of the Forum's pertinent mandate was provided to Committee members. In addition, information was provided on key areas of work with a focus on forest law enforcement, governance and trade, as well as the main provisions of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests that relate to forest law enforcement, governance and trade. In addition, extracts of some national voluntary reports were presented to showcase actions taken by countries to fight illegal logging at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels.

21. Given the policymaking role of the Forum on all issues related to forests and the policymaking role of the World Trade Organization on trade, including as it pertains to forest products, the collaboration between these two bodies is of strategic importance, especially taking into account the review of the international arrangement on forests and the post-2015 development agenda.

IV. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and processes

22. The multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015, which was prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49 and adopted by the Forum in its resolution 7/1, set a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. In paragraph 2 (c) of its resolution 2006/49, the Council agreed to strengthen interaction between the Forum on relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes,[5] with the participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and the effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.

23. In the Forum's programme of work, relevant regional and subregional entities are invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each Forum session, and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum secretariat prior to the session. Such entities are also invited to contribute to discussions at Forum sessions, according to their respective mandates, while the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report summarizing the entities' submissions. At its third meeting, held in Nairobi on 23 and 25 February 2014, the Bureau of the eleventh session of the Forum decided that the summary would be incorporated into the present report.

24. To facilitate the submission of inputs for the eleventh session, the Forum secretariat prepared an information note and a questionnaire; the 16 inputs received from regional and subregional entities are available in full from the Forum website[6] and are summarized below. A list of the entities that provided inputs is contained in the annex.

[5] Regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes are referred to as "entities" in the present report.

[6] See www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff11.html#regions.

A. Progress in implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests

25. In their submissions, the Forum's regional and subregional partners make it clear that the purpose of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests is a priority in their work planning, organization and implementation. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) submitted individual inputs from each of its seven regional forestry commissions, accompanied by a cover note containing general comments. In that cover note, it stated that, even though the regional forestry commissions did not make use of a mechanism specifically designed to address the implementation of the instrument, their work and the guidance given both to their members and FAO were directly relevant for the implementation of the instrument and for making progress in achieving the global objectives on forests.

26. Funding was a challenge for most regional and subregional entities, and the lack of appropriate financial resources could create obstacles to the full implementation of their work programmes. Regarding financing for sustainable forest management, some entities focused on the establishment or improvement of existing national forest funds in their respective countries. Others believed that the establishment of a global forest fund could provide a solution. Finally, several entities reported having collaborated closely with the Forum secretariat in the organization of events related to the facilitative process; they also reported having participated in those events.

27. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) reported that it was developing and implementing, at the regional level, projects that contributed directly to the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. Regarding efforts taken at the regional level to foster economically, socially and environmentally sound measures that promote the sustainable management of forests, the ACTO permanent secretariat highlighted the following initiatives and projects:

(a) A project on strengthening integration between the border regions of Acre, Brazil, and Ucayali, Peru, focused on building and reinforcing governmental and non-governmental capacities on both sides of the border, an area of high-forest-cover land, and contributed to increasing shared governance by, for instance, promoting coordinated action for environmental monitoring and control, as well as carrying out actions for the sustainable use of non-timber forest resources by indigenous and other local communities;

(b) A project on the development of a production chain of cosmetics based on the natural pigments *carayarú* (*Arrabidaea Chica*) and *Veé* (*Palicourea Triphylla D.C.*) in the municipality of Mitú, Colombia, contributed to the development of an agricultural processing business created by indigenous peoples to produce, process and commercialize cosmetics based on wild and domestic plants.

28. The African Forest Forum (AFF) reported having contributed to the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests by providing a platform for stakeholders in African forestry and by also providing technical and logistical support to African delegates to enable their participation in meetings that deal directly and indirectly with the instrument. AFF highlighted its work on fostering political commitment for sustainable forest management through

the provision of sound and reliable scientific and technical information to guide decision-making processes in Africa. For example, several AFF studies on how climate change affects African forestry had helped to raise awareness about forests and climate change issues and to build capacity to address them. AFF collaborated with other regional and subregional entities on the African continent, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), particularly in the area of forest law enforcement and governance in the context of the ministerial declaration adopted in Youndé on 16 October 2003, and the East African Community (EAC), which, together with AFF and the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources of the East African Legislative Assembly, are discussing a draft piece of forest management legislation. If adopted by Member States, that piece of legislation would contribute to further subregional integration in forestry and prevent illegal forest-related activities.

29. The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), an organization established pursuant to a proposal made at the Fifteenth Economic Leaders' Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), noted that it valued high-level regional cooperation in efforts to implement the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. In its report to the Forum at its eleventh session, APFNet reported that it had worked closely with Peruvian authorities to help ensure the success of the second meeting of ministers responsible for forestry, held in Cusco, Peru, in August 2013. On that occasion, ministers and senior officials of 19 APEC economies adopted the Cusco Statement, in which they addressed the challenges related to green growth and sustainable development. With the objective of fostering economically, socially and environmentally sound measures to promote sustainable forest management, APFNet developed a project aimed at developing sustainable agroforestry systems that could be adapted to upland areas in Chinese Taipei. The project, which ended in 2013, was able to demonstrate that sustainable agroforestry could bring economic benefits and resulted in the return of youths from urban areas to their villages, where life had become economically viable.

30. In December 2013, the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy was adopted at a joint meeting of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the FAO European Forestry Commission. The Action Plan contains information on how the forestry sector in the ECE region could lead the way in an emerging green, bio-based economy at the global level. It also contains an overall vision, strategies and a number of areas of activity, and proposed objectives and specific actions. Implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored by the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, which will also explore ways and means to measure the contribution and progress made by the European forestry sector towards a green economy. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) also contributed to the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument and the Action Plan by exploring a pan-European approach to the valuation of forest ecosystem services. In that regard, a workshop on the valuation of forest ecosystems was held in Belgrade in September 2014. Another workshop, on the green economy and social aspects of sustainable forest management, was held in Santander, Spain, in April 2014 (pursuant to action 5 of the current Forest Europe work programme). Finally, members of the FAO North American Forest Commission stated that appropriate attention should be given to forests and the

green economy, in particular through efforts to optimize the value chain of the forestry sector, innovation and the sound use of wood; green jobs and green infrastructure; and support for forest-sector competitiveness and measures to increase the sector's productivity.

31. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) highlighted that its member States had adopted a reference framework setting out criteria and indicators for assessing the legality of timber, as part of a phased approach for timber certification for sustainability. Some ASEAN member States were working on additional measures for a more responsible and sustainable trade in forest products through the development of national timber legality assurance systems, which were core elements of their voluntary partnership agreements on forest law enforcement, governance and trade with the European Union. Moreover, under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which set targets for the implementation, by 2015, of a common ASEAN market that would allow for the free flow of goods and services, the timber sector was identified as a priority for accelerated economic integration.

B. Progress in achieving the global objectives on forests

32. The Central African Forest Commission noted that the it was mandated to guide, harmonize and monitor forest and environmental policies in Central Africa and that it was working to achieve the global objectives on forests. At the regulatory and institutional levels, a subregional action plan to combat land degradation and desertification had been established. At the operational level, with a view to improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, community and social forestry initiatives had been experimented with in some countries and national mechanisms had been developed to share the benefits arising from forest use with the local communities.

33. Some regional and subregional entities were seriously considering the creation of new financial mechanisms. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) was implementing three regional REDD+ projects that were providing new sources of funding to support countries in the implementation of sustainable forest management and the achievement of the global objectives on forests. SPC supported member countries to enhance their capacity to better promote forestry internally and, consequently, attract more domestic funding. In collaboration with FAO, SPC was implementing a project funded by the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries to support SPC member countries in establishing and maintaining forest monitoring systems. SPC member countries also received support in establishing and maintaining community-based forestry projects, including on reforestation, aimed at increasing income levels and improving the livelihoods of the communities concerned. With regard to reversing the loss of forest cover, almost all SADC member States were members of the FAO National Forest Programme process, which provided an analytical framework to achieve sustainable forest management, including mechanisms to reduce the loss of forest cover. Five high-forest-cover members had recently joined the Collaborative Programme and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and were preparing to fulfil all the conditions required to receive REDD+ funds in the near future. All SADC member States saw REDD+ as an important mechanism for financing sustainable forest management and contributing to

socioeconomic development. Finally, ahead of the Fourth Mediterranean Forest Week, to be held in Barcelona, Spain, in March 2015, the FAO Committee on the Mediterranean Forestry Questions — *Silva Mediterranea* had launched a regional discussion on the climate change mitigation potential of Mediterranean forests, including on a REDD+ cost-benefit analysis in several Mediterranean countries, the adoption of a REDD+ and carbon financing regional road map and sessions on how to mobilize new and additional financial resources for Mediterranean forests.

34. The FAO Near East Forestry and Range Commission reported serving countries that were not heavily forested. In order to achieve the global objectives on forests, many of those countries were actively involved in tree-planting programmes and, as a consequence, the region had shown some improvement in terms of forest cover. Most of the region's forests were protected; only a few actually produced timber or non-timber goods. Countries had developed plans for protected area systems, adopted pertinent legislation and trained managers and rangers. Similarly, the secretariat of the Tehran Process for Low-Forest-Cover Countries focused on planting trees and on afforestation, forest rehabilitation, limitations on forest harvesting, a forest protection programme and research on specific criteria and indicators on sustainable forest management to assist low-forest-cover countries in achieving the global objectives on forests. Other important elements were the promotion of non-wood products, medicinal plants and community participation in forest management. Finally, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) provided a report containing input from its secretariat and three of its member States. ECO members prioritized afforestation, bans on cutting green trees, seasonal tree-planting campaigns and protection from forest fires. In order to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, one ECO member reported making yearly transfers of State-owned forest land to the population, both for grazing and the cultivation of crops.

35. The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests for non-European Countries (Montreal Process) reported making use of seven criteria and 54 indicators to provide transparent data and information regarding progress towards reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management. The fact that those criteria and indicators, as well as the technical notes on their implementation, now paid more attention to social and environmental benefits meant that it was easier to measure progress made towards improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, which could, in turn, help individual countries to measure progress made towards achieving the global objectives on forests.

36. With regard to increasing the area of protected forests in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO reported acting as secretary of the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on National Parks, Other Protected Areas and Wildlife. In the framework of that Network, capacity-building assistance had been provided, including through an online course on the management of protected areas. In addition, a project was being prepared to support the implementation of a regional strategy for strengthening the management of national parks in the Amazon region.

C. Contribution of forests and the international arrangement on forests to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

37. FAO reported having collaborated with APFNet and the Asia Forest Network on a multi-country project and policy study entitled "Making forestry work for the poor: adapting forest policies to poverty alleviation strategies in Asia and the Pacific". The study, covering 11 countries, assessed the extent to which poverty had been reduced through forestry activities in the region. FAO also collaborated with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) on a multi-country study on mainstreaming gender issues into the forest policies of developing countries that are members of the FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission. As part of the study, a baseline analysis was carried out on the integration of gender into the forest policies of member countries of the pertinent FAO regional forestry commission and recommendations were made on mainstreaming gender into the forest policies of countries in the region.

38. RECOFTC reported that, since it was the only international non-profit organization specializing in capacity-building for community forestry and devolved forest management, it held a unique place in the world of forestry. RECOFTC suggested that there were three ways of assessing the contribution of forests to the Millennium Development Goals: (a) with regard to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1), the correlation between forest tenure and poverty levels, particularly in rural forest communities, could be an indicator; (b) with regard to ensuring environmental sustainability (Goal 7), the indicators could be the proportion of land covered by forests, access to payment for the environmental services of communities, the quality of forest lands awarded to communities and forest-based local livelihoods; and (c) with regard to promoting gender equality and empowering women (Goal 3), the disaggregation of data according to gender in forest communities, social inclusion and gender equity practices, as well as gender mainstreaming policies, could serve as indicators.

39. According to the EAC secretariat, the empowerment of communities surrounding forests through education, employment and the sustainable use of forest resources were indicators that could be used to assess the contribution of forests to the Millennium Development Goals. Periodic environmental audits on forests and their surrounding areas could be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing and reversing forest degradation.

40. The FAO African Forestry and Wildlife Commission too proposed various indicators, such as the number of forest communities trained, the number of forest nurseries established, the number of plantations established and the number of forest areas restored. The rates of land degradation, forest degradation and deforestation could also be used to assess the contribution of forests to the Millennium Development Goals. The quantities and types of non-wood forest products, the percentage of men and women participating in forest activities annually, forest-related employment trends and the contribution of forests to food security could all be measures of social improvement.

D. Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and future options

41. In the cover note to its report, FAO mentioned the role of regional entities in the future international arrangement on forests. Specifically, it noted that regional forestry commissions had been playing an active role in supporting the preparation and coordination of Forum sessions at the regional level. It also noted that several of those bodies had, as a standing item on their agendas, the consideration of developments relating to the arrangement and the reports of the Forum on its sessions. As a generic recommendation regarding future options for the arrangement, FAO reported that, depending on the will of Member States, the regional forestry commissions could provide a platform for strengthening coordination at the regional level for the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests or for encouraging regional dialogue in the framework of the arrangement.

42. According to ECE, the United Nations regional commissions were ideally placed to strengthen tools for implementing the international arrangement on forests at the regional level, guide implementation and monitor and assess progress in achieving its goals. Moreover, the commissions could also be mandated to "translate" and implement Forum decisions and the post-2015 forest agenda at the regional level. ECE specifically noted that the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section could be more involved in assisting countries in the process for the implementation of the arrangement, in particular if the role of the regional commissions were to be formally recognized in the arrangement's implementation mechanism. On the other hand, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific noted that in its region, where the FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission had a strong presence, member States saw little added value in having the Commission support intergovernmental dialogues on forest-related matters.

43. Some regional and subregional entities did not or could not fully answer the pertinent section of the questionnaire. Forest Europe stated that the individual signatories would provide the requested evaluation and suggestions, the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa did not contribute its vision of a strengthened regional or subregional component in the future international arrangement on forests and SPC stated that a position on the review of the arrangement had yet to be agreed upon. The three Sates members of ECO that had responded to the questionnaire for regional and subregional entities had done so in their national capacity, so their answers on this specific subject were not included in the present report. The secretariat of the Tehran Process for Low-Forest-Cover Countries did not comment on the review but stated that there was no suitable place for low-forest-cover countries in the current arrangement and that a revised arrangement should take into account the potential of such countries as sites for plantations and vegetation cover-related initiatives and projects.

44. The Montreal Process stressed that more attention should be paid to monitoring, assessment and reporting and mentioned the Co-Chairs' summary of the discussions held during the first meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests (E/CN.18/2015/5, annex), suggesting that the addition of a position in the Forum secretariat dedicated to coordinating monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts could be considered. ASEAN too mentioned the Forum secretariat in its submission and suggested that its

structure, including with regard to its human and financial resources, should be improved so that the Forum secretariat's role and functions could be enhanced, especially in view of the post-2015 development agenda.

45. ACTO referred to the discussions of the Expert Group and endorsed several of the points raised at its first meeting, such as the need to clarify the functions of regional processes and to look into the possibility of transcending traditional regional processes to cooperate with other organizations on regional and subregional actions. Moreover, regional entities should incorporate Forum resolutions and decisions into their work programmes and prioritize them; the Forum should organize "regional days" to highlight regional viewpoints and showcase regional success stories; web-based regional communication instruments should be devised; and regional meetings organized in coordination with regional entities should be held in years when the Forum did not meet. Regarding cooperation with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, ACTO had been implementing initiatives in conjunction with several of its members, but none had been carried out to support the Forum's work; in the future, the link between ACTO and the Partnership should be made clear.

46. EAC noted that the international arrangement on forests was strengthened by its increasing recognition by parties, since the arrangement stimulated and spearheaded the international forest conservation agenda; its major weakness lay in the absence of a legally binding instrument. SADC too believed that the arrangement should be legally binding, so that its decisions could be enforced; moreover, it should have a financing mechanism to facilitate the implementation of sustainable forest management. Given that the SADC secretariat only had observer status in the Forum, its views were not taken into account; in the future, it should be recognized as a full member.

47. RECOFTC viewed the non-legally binding nature of the international arrangement on forests as a weakness and highlighted the need for cross-sectoral linkages, as many of the root problems faced by forests lay outside forests. In order to improve the effectiveness of the arrangement, RECOFT proposed establishing linkages with different stakeholders and noted that greater and more active involvement from civil society and more and stronger coordination with other regional efforts were needed. ASEAN stated that, in order for the arrangement to function more effectively in the future, it should develop strategic engagement with actors from non-forestry sectors such as industry, mining, agriculture, public works and human settlements. AFF specifically noted the absence of the scientific community from the discussion on the international arrangement on forests. In the future, the arrangement and all related activities would have more impact if they could benefit from technical input linking science with development, provide a platform for a more technical discussion of issues and allow for more involvement of scientific institutions, civil society and the private sector.

48. Finally, APFNet suggested that regional forums be organized periodically to assess regional needs, review current progress, discuss common challenges and identify regional priorities, which should be consistent with the future international arrangement on forests. Moreover, regional and subregional entities could organize training workshops to promote implementation of the arrangement.

V. Initiatives in support of the work of the Forum

A. Member State support

49. Throughout the years, Member States have supported the work of the Forum in various ways, including through the organization of activities aiming at furthering understanding among stakeholders of items in the Forum's programme of work. Those activities are known as country-led initiatives.

50. Between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum, two country-led initiatives were organized to support the work of the Forum. The first one, entitled "Workshop on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015", was held in Beijing from 29 to 31 October 2014. Organized and sponsored by the Government China, the event was co-sponsored by the Governments of Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the United States of America. Participants discussed various possibilities regarding the strengthening of the arrangement (see E/CN.18/2015/11). Sponsors' financial contributions to the event totalled $315,459, with China contributing $133,370, Germany contributing $55,500, Austria and Canada contributing $40,000 each, Switzerland contributing $22,289, Finland contributing $20,000 and the United States contributing $4,300.

51. A second country-led initiative, on governing forest landscapes and lessons learned from 10 years of experience and the way forward after 2015, was organized and sponsored by the Government of Switzerland and co-sponsored by the Governments of Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Ukraine. The initiative was held in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 3 to 6 February 2015. Participants took stock of the regional events on forest governance held during the past 10 years and discussed how forest governance might be highlighted by strengthening the international arrangement on forests. The Government of Switzerland provided $470,000 for the organization of the event.

52. Member States also contributed to the work of the Forum by financing projects tackling various aspects of the Forum's mandate, including the review of the international arrangement on forests. China, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States contributed financially to the work of the Forum.

B. Major groups support

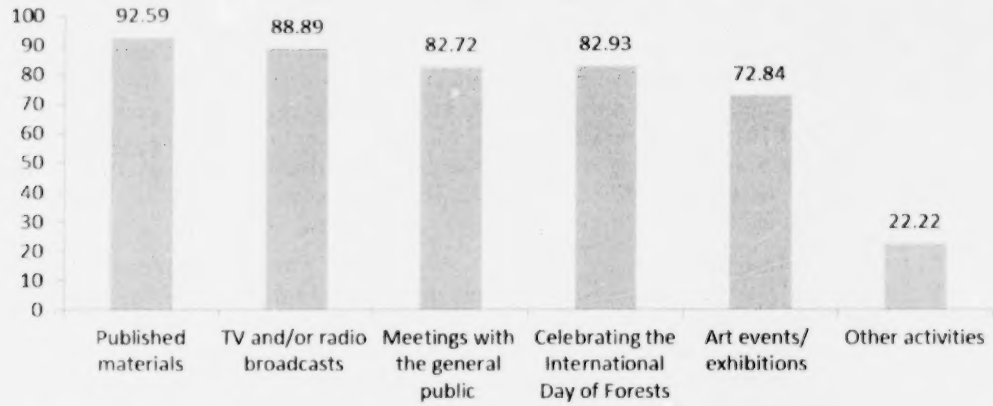
53. Information on the contributions made by major groups to the work of the Forum and to the review of the international arrangement on forests are contained in the note by the Secretariat on the multi-stakeholder dialogue (E/CN.18/2015/6) and the discussion paper submitted by the major groups (E/CN.18/2015/6/Add.1). In order to contribute to the work of the Forum at its eleventh session, stakeholders were organizing a major groups-led initiative to be held in Kathmandu from 2 to 6 March 2015, on designing vehicles for securing the means to implement sustainable forest management. The initiative will be hosted by the Government of Nepal and financed by the Government of Germany, which provided $675,460 for the organization of the initiative and a planning meeting for the Major Groups Partnership on Forests.

VI. Enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including to mark the International Day of Forests

54. In the national reports they submitted to the Forum at its eleventh session, 81 countries reported having carried out a wide range of communications activities — from symposiums to competitions, field days and films on forests — to promote and encourage public awareness of important benefits arising from forests.

Figure I

Percentage of countries that undertook public awareness activities, by type



55. Seventy-five countries published promotional materials on forests, such as brochures, pamphlets, leaflets and posters. In its eighth national forest inventory report, China highlighted forests' role in socioeconomic development, in maintaining ecological security and in addressing climate change. Guinea raised public awareness through pamphlets in its national languages. Indonesia produced posters and brochures to engage youth at schools. Guatemala and Malaysia focused on mangrove protection and training forest producers, and New Zealand and Samoa released publications on sustainable forest management. Portugal launched a national campaign to illustrate the socioeconomic importance of forests to the national economy.

56. Seventy-two countries reported having broadcast campaigns promoting forests through television and radio stations. Among those countries were Azerbaijan, Belarus, Botswana, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Liberia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Niger, Pakistan, Panama and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Congo, Grenada and Lithuania broadcast campaigns on sustainable forest management. China focused on achievements in forest shelter belts, while Yemen ran weekly radio and television programmes dedicated to the importance of afforestation and forest and soil conservation. The Plurinational State of Bolivia promoted awareness of the benefits arising from forests through television commercials. Japan ran television and radio programmes and supported the production of forest-related novels and movies with the private sector. The United States created various materials, including documentaries, public service announcements and data-sharing tools, and promoted

international cooperation with the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests for non-European Countries. It also created 45 videos showcasing forest projects for the World Congress of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations and a new advertising campaign on forest fire prevention. The State of Palestine created a film about the rehabilitation of degraded vegetation in dry areas.

57. Fifty-nine countries, including France, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius and the United States, held exhibitions and art events; a photography exhibit was held in Mexico; film festivals were held in Albania and Nigeria; theatre performances were held in the Congo; an open-air museum on forestry was created in Slovakia; and travelling exhibitions were organized in India and Luxembourg.

58. Sixty-seven countries, including Afghanistan, Angola, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and the Russian Federation, reported on public events held to promote the important benefits of forests. The participatory process that went into the preparation of the *Government Report on Forest Policy 2050* of Finland involved regional meetings and wider public engagement through an online portal. Debates, seminars and conferences on developments and scientific research in the forestry sector were held in Malaysia, the Niger, Romania and Slovakia and annual trade shows were held in Canada, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

59. Eighteen countries reported hosting other activities to further engage the public. Among them were nationwide tree-planting events in Botswana, Canada, China, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya and Liberia and reforestation campaigns in Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Myanmar, the Niger, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania.

60. A number of countries established awards for excellence in the field of forestry. Austria awarded individuals a "forest ambassador prize" as part of its national forest week celebrations. Similarly, a prize for achievement in the area of forest economics and markets was awarded in Brazil on 21 March, the International Day of Forests, to support forestry management in the country. Kenya had granted awards for sustainable livelihood and integrated approaches to ecosystem rehabilitation. Mexico established its national forestry merit award and, in 2011, Portugal launched a national prize for architecture in wood to encourage and promote the forestry sector. Samoa focused on innovation through a participatory three-dimensional modelling process.

International Day of Forests

61. In 2014, activities to mark the International Day of Forests were held in countries around the world, including Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan and Viet Nam. Most countries reported having formed partnerships with non-governmental organizations, research institutions, United Nations entities, the private sector and development actors to extend the reach of their advocacy efforts. United Nations officials called on countries to boost resources dedicated for forests. Local communities, civil society organizations and United Nations entities together raised awareness about forests, launching campaigns on the need to invest in forests, forestry data and the links between forestry data and efforts to manage climate change.

62. Sixty-eight countries reported having hosted activities to celebrate the International Day of Forests in 2014 (see figure II). Low-forest-cover countries like Armenia, the Comoros, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Yemen also celebrated the International Day. In addition to submitting national reports, the following prepared special reports on activities carried out in celebration of the International Day in 2014: Argentina, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Portugal and the State of Palestine.

Figure II

Countries and areas that celebrated the International Day of Forests in 2014

63. Heads of State and ministers, including from Argentina, Kenya, Madagascar, Portugal, Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine, participated in official ceremonies for the International Day. These advocacy efforts spanned a broad spectrum of activities and involved school children and government officials in programmes for the planting of endemic species of trees in China, Grenada, India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Samoa, Serbia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the State of Palestine.

64. During its International Day celebrations, the Dominican Republic recognized the contributions of goods and services provided by forests for the welfare of society. The United States focused on the importance of forests' benefits to all citizens, while Nepal celebrated forest conservation and management at the local level and Jamaica raised awareness of the role of people in protecting and sustainably utilizing forests. Zimbabwe focused its celebrations on the topic of protecting forests for improved livelihoods and encouraged knowledge-sharing on community-based forest management and small and medium-sized forest

enterprises. The State of Palestine emphasized the socioeconomic aspects of forests and promoted afforestation activities. Madagascar promoted the multifunctional importance of forest ecosystems through public advocacy campaigns broadcast on television and radio.

65. To increase community awareness and promote the sustainable management of forests, Indonesia ran a television and radio campaign, a photography contest on Facebook and an exhibition on forests and national development, and complemented those outreach initiatives with posters and banners to promote the International Day. Samoa ran radio and television advertisements and organized poster competitions and traditional singing contests. Ukraine held a drawing and essay competition on forests and people for students.

66. The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Madagascar and Portugal organized forestry debates, seminars and conferences, along with sculpture and painting exhibits. In addition to organizing an expo involving environmental agencies and a radio campaign, Jamaica encouraged students to express their views on forests through a poetry competition. Switzerland, together with ECE and FAO, hosted an art event entitled "Forests for fashion" that included day-long events focusing on the contributions of the sustainable forestry sector. Artists, designers and representatives of the private, business, fashion and forestry sectors gathered to discuss the potential of forests to supply sustainable fibres. Zimbabwe organized an exhibition on the value of forestry for food security.

67. At United Nations Headquarters, in New York, the Forum secretariat held a series of activities, among which were a week-long series of film screenings, a two-week exhibit of award-winning photographs and children's art, and a special event on 21 March highlighting the role of women as agents of change for forests and sustainable development. The special event included a panel discussion with inspiring speakers and award-winning short films. The event was attended by representatives of more than 100 Member States, non-governmental organizations and experts and was webcast live by UN Television, thereby engaging a global audience of more than 5,000 viewers.

68. In their statements at the special event, some members of the Forest Eleven group of countries — Brazil, Finland, Gabon, Indonesia, Peru, Suriname and Turkey — called for the inclusion of forests in the post-2015 development agenda. They noted that the future development agenda needed to ensure the active engagement of women in planning, managing and making decisions about forest resources through enhanced support in the areas of financing, capacity-building and technology development and transfer related to sustainable forest management. The Russian Federation stressed that forests needed to be adequately reflected in the post-2015 development agenda and expressed support for multilateral cooperation for sustainable forest management, highlighting the review on the international arrangement on forests as an opportunity to further strengthen the Forum as a central platform for the multilateral dialogue on forests. Argentina emphasized the importance of forests not only as a central provider of ecosystem functions, but also as a source of life and culture for local communities and indigenous peoples. It noted that forests could play an important role in implementing mechanisms for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in favour of developing countries. FAO emphasized that improving information on forest resources was a key factor in halting illegal deforestation and forest degradation.

69. To amplify the celebration of the International Day, a 21-day social media campaign entitled "My forest, our future" was conducted by the Forum secretariat in partnership with the Communications and Information Management Service of the Departments of Economic and Social Affairs and of Public Information. The campaign focused on individuals' personal and unique connection to forests. Through highly visual content, from award-winning films on the topic of forests to infographics and ready-to-print forest posters, the campaign cultivated a diverse audience. The campaign had more than 2.3 million Twitter followers and made over 7 million impressions on 21 March 2014.

VII. Conclusions and the way forward

70. The international arrangement on forests has been in place since 2000. The present report shows how the Forum and its secretariat have enhanced the level of cooperation with many diverse stakeholders. The current proposals on the sustainable development goals highlight the role that forests and sustainable forest management will continue to play in the post-2015 development agenda; combined with the current review of the effectiveness of the arrangement, this points to even more enhanced cooperation with stakeholders in the future.

71. The contributions submitted by regional and subregional entities to the Forum at its eleventh session reaffirm the important role that they play and their commitment to implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all kinds of forests and supporting the achievement of the four global objectives on forests, as well as the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. More significantly, though, the contributions provide a clear vision for the future from the specific perspective of regional and subregional entities.

72. The wide range of activities conducted on coordinated communications emphasize the continued importance of raising public and political awareness through data and information, intersectoral cooperation and targeted communication. Raising awareness of the importance of all types of forests and of trees outside forests is an integral component of efforts to strengthen implementation of sustainable forest management and to integrate forests into the post-2015 development agenda.

73. On the basis of the discussions held during the first and second meetings of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests and the independent assessment of the arrangement,[7] various ways and means to strengthen regional collaboration and the involvement of regional and subregional organizations and processes in the future arrangement have been identified.

74. Recommendations and key action points on these issues are included in the Secretary-General's report on reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options (E/CN.18/2015/2).

[7] The report on the assessment is available from www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/iaf/IAF-Assessement%20Report-Final-12%20Sep-2014.pdf.

Annex

Regional and subregional entities providing inputs to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its eleventh session

The following regional and subregional entities provided inputs to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its eleventh session:

- African Forest Forum
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
- Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- Central African Forest Commission
- East African Community
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Economic Commission for Europe
- Economic Cooperation Organization
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe)
- Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- Southern African Development Community
- Secretariat of the Tehran Process for Low-Forest-Cover Countries
- Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (Montreal Process)